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*The Canadian commonwealth.* By Agnes C. Laut. [Problems of the nations, edited by Paul Leland Haworth, Ph.D.] (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill company, 1915. 343 p. \$1.50 net)

Miss Laut is a Canadian, resident in the United States, and she knows both the strength and the weakness of Canada. Those who imagine from its title that the book is a Canadian counterpart of the grave and careful study of the American commonwealth by Lord Bryce will be disappointed. Miss Laut says little about the constitutional system of Canada and has made no deep study of the working of political institutions. She deals with topics which Lord Bryce does not touch. The eighteen brief chapters touch successively upon natural resources, relations to Great Britain and the United States, industrialism, mode of government, social life, defense. In one chapter at the end Miss Laut takes a flight into her favourite field and describes the conditions in which the fur trade is carried on. It is a chapter not only vivid but instructive for we learn how vital an industry the fur trade still is, what vast tracts of Canada are wild and almost unexplored, and what wonders, old yet always new, nature still conceals in these remote spots. Paddling in the watery wilderness in the north Miss Laut came upon this scene:

"I had lived all my life in the West and I had never heard . . . any oldest timer tell anything like it! For seven miles, you could not have laid your paddle on the water without disturbing coveys of geese and duck, geese and duck of such variety as I have never seen classified or named in any book on birds. We sat very still behind the hiding of reed and watched and watched. We couldn't talk. We had lost ourselves in one of the secluded breeding places of wild fowl in the North." (p. 313).

Canada has just begun to find herself. Not till many years after railways were being built in the United States did Canada have the means to face this problem seriously. Yet some five million people had completed a railway from ocean to ocean only sixteen years after the United States, with twelve times this population, had built a line across the Rocky mountains. Now Canada has three transcontinental lines and has, in truth, though Miss Laut does not say so, gone on too rapidly with railway building. A route to Europe by way of Hudson's Bay remains to be completed. Like that by the great lakes it will be closed in winter because of the ice, but it will be open from May to the end of October, long enough to be of real use.

The most valuable part of the book consists in the attempt to interpret the mind of Canada. It was founded by loyalties, by French devoted to their Catholic birth, by British Tories from the United States devoted to their king. These loyalties endure. It is not uncommon still

to hear in Canada the note of contempt for republican institutions which expresses an inheritance from the passions of the American revolution. There is no doubt that the outlook of Canada on politics is different from that of the United States and any thought of political union should be dismissed forever. The note of doctrinaire enthusiasm for democracy, often heard on platforms in the United States, is rarely heard in Canada, though Canada is not less democratic. The churches play a more vital part in the life of Canada than they do in that of the United States. Industrialism has not yet matured in Canada the grave problems of social discontent to be found in the republic. Miss Laut describes briefly the differences in methods of government. While a president or a governor in the United States can remain in office for only a defined and short period a prime minister may retain power in Canada for a score of years. Sir John Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, between them, governed Canada for quite forty years. All the judges in Canada are appointed by the one federal authority, the whole resources of the federal government are available to vindicate public order, and there have been no lawless mining camps or lynchings in Canada. All this and more Miss Laut says. Americans will be especially interested in her account of the relations between Canada and Great Britain. Neither pays anything to the other. The relation is really one of sentiment, and is all the stronger because it is of this character.

Miss Laut describes a young and virile democracy. She thinks that there has not been a leader in federated Canada who began life with anything like an independent fortune. In this society, led by self-made, self-reliant men, there is certain to be vigor and also, indeed, crudeness. Miss Laut does not deny that Canada is in some things backward. She wonders that a native Canadian literature has not yet matured with any marked luxuriance. The answer is really simple. Canada, with the language of both England and the United States, has their vast supplies of literature to draw upon and has not been forced to look to her own powers. Goethe said that he would have had little inducement to write poetry had Germany possessed a poetic literature as rich as that of England. Besides this, the Canadian author, having at home only a small market, has sought wider fields in England or the United States and has weakened Canadian production by so much. Miss Laut complains that Canada is slow to seize opportunity. The Canadian west, she charges, has not yet grasped the real significance of the Panama canal. Canada also has not yet developed its resources for building ships. All this means that a young country has only begun to use its energies. Time will solve such problems and an energetic and intelligent people will probably find the right solution. Miss Laut is rightly anxious

about the effect that heavy foreign immigration may have in Canada. She describes with much insight the problem of oriental immigration and she would say "go slow" in regard to immigration even from continental Europe. The British and the American immigrants are the ones to seek.

Miss Laut is too rapid, too full of enthusiasm, to be always accurate. She has written the book largely out of her own experiences and it shows no erudition. She has not thought out what the federation of Canada with Great Britain would mean. Canadians, she says, do not wish to go to Westminster "to legislate on a deceased wife's sister's bills and Welsh disestablishment." (p. 47) Of course they do not and no really imperial legislature would be charged with any other matters than those of common defense, and of foreign relations as linked with defense. One would like proof that an American weekly has a larger circulation in every city of Canada "than any daily in any city of Canada." (p. 78) It is simply not true. "Canada" says Miss Laut, "could not conceive of a man who had been a judge being nominated for the premiership" (p. 233); yet two judges, Sir Oliver Mowat and Sir John Thompson, left the bench and became prime ministers. In what province of Canada is there a law, as Miss Laut says, which makes the age of legal consent to marriage twelve years? But even if she is a trifle cocksure and more than a trifle careless in statement and slangy in style Miss Laut has written a book which deserves to be widely read.

*Peace episodes on the Niagara.* Other studies and reports. [Buffalo historical society publications, volume xviii, edited by Frank H. Severance.] (Buffalo: Buffalo historical society, 1914. 382 p. \$3.50)

How suddenly and rudely the outbreak of the great war in midsummer, 1914, disrupted the life of the civilized world is illustrated afresh by the volume under consideration. It had been intended, the editorial preface informs us, to include in the volume a carefully compiled record of the world-wide celebration of the centenary of peace between the two great English-speaking nations of the world, planned to be held at the close of 1914. When the time came, alas, both England and America were preoccupied with other and more urgent matters. Notwithstanding the fact that the celebration was not held, the editor has included in the volume a number of papers devoted to various peace episodes on the Niagara frontier; and this group, written by Mr. Severance, secretary of the society, comprises approximately the first half of the book.

The initial paper in the group is a well-written and useful seventy-five page account of the peace conference held at Niagara Falls in 1914.